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Caddo-Bossier Homeland Security Trains Students in CAMPUS-CERT

On November 5th through 9th of last year, four area colleges and universities' emergency response staffs attended a Campus CERT training event hosted by the Caddo-Bossier Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and the Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC). Leadership and staff from BPCC, LA Tech University, Southern University Bossier-Shreveport, and Centenary College attended the five day event. The participants varied from the Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs, Chiefs of Campus Police, and the Health and Safety and Directors of Physical Plants and Facilities. The first three days of training were conducted at BPCC with a



Graduation Day for Campus CERT volunteers

combination of in-class presentations and hands-on demonstrations, including Incident Command simulations with actual responding fire apparatus and EMS vehicles. Other specialty training included a one-on-one demonstration of bomb squad equipment and capabilities available to the

campus and first responder unified command upon request. The fourth day of instruction was conducted at the Bossier City Fire Station Academy, due to the extensive nature of hands-on training with fire extinguishers and light rescue techniques. On day

five, the Campus CERT class once again trained at the Bossier City Fire Training Academy, participating in four entirely realistic full-scale, hands-on disaster scenarios.

All participants trained in a safe condition, fitted with issued light CERT Rescue Bags (helmet, vest, gloves, medical gloves, N95 mask, and goggles). Upon completion, all received a certificate of CERT training by CB-OHSEP. LTC Gene Barattini (Ret) LEM, MEM, the Assistant Director of Operations for CB-OHSEP, designed the resource intensive training event by bringing as much realism as possible to the Campus CERT experience.

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Jefferson Parish Forms First Citizen Corps Council

Jefferson Parish has joined the other parishes of UASI Region I in continuing to build a Citizen Corps program in the area. Citizen Corps representatives from Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines Parishes have worked with the Jefferson Parish Department of Emergency Management to form its own local council. Director Ken Padgett says, "The first meeting of our Citizen Corp Council was held on

February 1st at the EOC." Padgett continued, "At this moment the Council will be charged by me and made up of representatives from Emergency Management, Red Cross, Catholic Charities, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff Office, the Gretna Police Department, East Jefferson General Hospital, West Jefferson General Hospital, and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security."

Jefferson Parish continues its search for additional members to the Council, including representatives from the Fire Department and other agencies.

Padgett says, "At this time we will be starting with the CERT program, but we are looking at the other programs as well. I am hoping for an outstanding year with the Council."

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The classes employed area fire and police senior trainers, CB-OHSEP CERT volunteers, and BPCC Homeland Security Practicum students. Day One began with "How Things Really Work." The class included leadership simulation using actual 911 center personnel, fire department dispatchers, and engine company and trauma unit members. They gave a hands-on demonstration on how to carry handicapped students and staff down staircases. A one hour presentation on emotional aspects of disasters and fundamentals of Incident Command was also given.

On Day Two, students experienced "Understand the Threat," a security presentation by an area and regional expert. The class placed heavy emphasis on pre-planning with local law enforcement instead of reacting after a tragic event.

On Day Three, students received disaster emergency medical training with emphasis by FEMA and DHS on the fundamentals of first aid. The instructors gave extensive coverage to the triage system and how the actions of campus personnel prior to the arrival of first responders could save the most lives. Using the BPCC Campus commons area, hands-on instruction was given on how to litter carry with common college furniture such as hand tables, chairs, or pieces of a damaged building, such as

doors. The class was also instructed on basic morgue procedures.

On Day Four, fire safety and light rescue were taught at the Fire Training Academy. Staff fired actual ABC five-pound extinguishers and used the new fire training device at BCFD Academy to put out all three types of fires (A, B, C). Staff also learned to use in-building search and rescue methods.

On Day Five, the class participated in a full-scale exercise to apply the lessons learned on the other four days. In Event #1, students had to deal with a power line on a student's car, with the occupant acting only somewhat cooperatively. In Event #2, they had to locate students in a building using the right-hand rescue method in total blackout conditions. In Event #3, the students fought various small fires, as every student must use a fire extinguisher correctly.

The exercise concluded with a Collective Task that included all participants, in which a tornado had supposedly hit the education building. Team #1 established Campus Incident Command, Team #2 triaged and treated patients using moulage gear, and Team #3 established triage sites and assisted in relocation of patients.



Caddo-Bossier CERT recruits demonstrate fire safety

Putting Your Citizen Corps Program On the Fast Track with Consolidation

Many parishes don't realize that they may already have eligible volunteer programs that could participate in Citizen Corps by simply registering them. Consider this: in 2002, the National Sheriffs' Association expanded and enhanced the old National Neighborhood Watch program. It became USA on Watch, which is a recognized and vital component of Citizen Corps. Thus, any parish with an official chapter of the program already has part of its Citizen Corps program. In fact, all of the Citizen Corps volunteer programs require the participation of existing emergency response and law enforcement agencies. Many of those agencies already have volunteer or reserve auxiliaries. Even if they don't, they may employ volunteers for other functions. The great strength of the Citizen Corps program is that it allows each jurisdiction to decide how to make best use of their programs. One parish's CERT may look like a sheriff's department, while another may seem more like a PTA chapter. That flexibility allows for preexisting programs to be brought under the Citizen Corps umbrella.



USA on Watch plays a vital role in the Citizen Corps program

Orleans Parish CERT Expands Education and Outreach in 2008

Changing times in the City of New Orleans have brought both hardship and opportunity to a select segment of local volunteers. The New Orleans Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, is a body of volunteers devoted to serving their city and region in times of disaster. The organization, which began local activities in 2002, was formed as part of President Bush's mandate for the formation of a Citizen Corps following September 11, 2001. Under the leadership of CERT Commander Jason Higginbotham, its ranks had swollen to more than 80 volunteers before Katrina decimated its numbers. But this diehard group, although smaller, has reinvigorated itself with a passion for service in the post-Katrina community by promoting its message of emergency preparedness, neighborhood involvement, and leadership.

Pre-Katrina, CERT offered a number of programs to volunteers, including amateur HAM radio licensing, first aid training and the ability to work with local emergency management officials during

key events in New Orleans. Activities involved assisting in manning the emergency operation's center (EOC) during Mardi Gras, providing outreach at Jazzfest, and answering phones and operating communications at the EOC during hurricane evacuations. In addition to formal training, volunteers brought with them life experience in trade industries, security, law, medicine, and a number of other disciplines.

During Katrina the value of the program was self-evident, as CERT stepped up to the plate and took on responsibilities they never dreamed they'd have to. During that time of trial, CERT members took the initiative to repair generators at City Hall and Charity Hospital, perform boat rescues, and answer 911 calls. For their bravery during Katrina, a number of CERT members were recently commended by the New Orleans City Council.

Experience has taught Orleans Parish CERT that it can do great things. Renewed



Orleans Parish CERT offers opportunities and training throughout the year.

interest from local and federal Homeland Security officials has propelled CERT to begin recruiting and training new volunteers to assist in future crises. In addition, plans are underway to offer CERT training to businesses, schools, churches, and non-profit agencies. With the assistance of the New Orleans Fire Department, Orleans Parish CERT can conduct its unique emergency preparedness classes during working hours. This will significantly increase the number of trained citizens for 2008.

CERT continues its mission as a support team for the

City-Assisted Evacuation, and supporting the New Orleans Emergency Operations Center. If you'd like to be a part of this effort, call the City Office of Emergency Preparedness at 504-658-8700 and ask how you can become a CERT volunteer.

Looking Ahead to 2008

2008 is shaping up to be a great year for Citizen Corps programs throughout Louisiana. We have seen record participation in all our programs from Caddo-Bossier to Terrebonne and have a strong State Council that continues to lead all of our parishes along the road to preparedness. This year will see our first newsletter published with the aim to bring you CC news from across the State every quarter. We also intend to introduce legislation which will provide State funding for Citizen Corps programs to help us grow.

As Katrina and Rita made painfully obvious, you can never be too prepared. Fire, Police and Sheriff and EMS departments throughout the State are beginning to embrace Citizen Corps volunteers and recognize what a valuable asset they can be both in emergency situations and in assisting in exercises and everyday operations of their departments. Thanks to all of you who participated to make 2007 a success, and to all of you who will make 2008 even better!

Eric Pickering

Fire Extinguisher Operation and Safety

Fighting Small Fires

Remember, most residential fire extinguishers are good only for putting out small fires. Some extinguishers discharge completely in as little as 8 to 10 seconds! Before you even consider using a fire extinguisher, you must be sure that:

You have the confidence needed to fight the fire. Make sure that everyone else is leaving and that someone is calling the fire department. Ensure that the fire is small, confined, and will not spread. Never allow the fire to get between you and your exit from the room. Also, make sure that you have the right type of extinguisher to fight the fire. If you are unsure about your ability to fight it, make your escape and call the fire department from outside, instead.

Operating a Fire Extinguisher

P – Pull the pin. The pin unlocks the operating mechanism and allows you to depress the lever. Certain fire extinguishers have metal pins while others have plastic loops that must be pulled before the extinguisher can be used.

A – Aim low. Point the extinguisher, nozzle, hose, or horn at the base of the fire.

S – Squeeze the lever. Squeezing the lever will discharge the extinguishing agent. Certain extinguishers may have a push button mechanism instead of a lever.

S – Sweep the nozzle, hose, or horn from side to side. Moving carefully toward the flames, keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep back and forth. Stay low to avoid breathing smoke and toxic gases.

Once the fire is out, watch the fire area and be prepared to act if the fire re-ignites. Have the fire department inspect the fire site even if you are sure that the fire is out.

Matching Your Fire Extinguisher to the Fire



There are three common types of fire in the home. Your extinguisher must match the type of fire you are fighting.

Class A fires involve paper, wood, and other ordinary combustibles.

Class B fires involve flammable liquids such as oil, some paints, and gasoline.

Class C fires involve energized electrical equipment such as power tools, wiring, fuse boxes, appliances, televisions, computers, and electric motors.

“Multipurpose” extinguishers (labeled A, B, and C) may be used on all classes of fires and are appropriate for use in homes, workplaces, and automobiles. Extinguishers labeled only for Class A fires contain water and are dangerous if used on grease, gasoline, or electrical fires. An extinguisher labeled with a red slash through any of the fire class symbols indicates that the extinguisher should not be used on that class of fire. A missing symbol indicates that the extinguisher has not been tested for that class of fire.

Extinguisher Size

Portable fire extinguishers are rated for the size of fire they can handle. Ratings appear on the label – for example, 2A:10B:C. In that example, the 2A means the extinguisher carries a rating of 2 for fighting Class A fires and a rating of 10 for fighting Class B fires; the C means the extinguisher can be used safely on energized electrical equipment. The larger the number, the bigger the fire the extinguisher can handle. Bigger models are usually heavier and more difficult to carry. Be sure to purchase a fire extinguisher that is the right size for you.

Fire Extinguisher Maintenance

Most A-B-C fire extinguishers sold for residential use contain dry chemicals and have a gauge to indicate if the extinguisher is fully charged. Periodically check to make sure your extinguisher is fully charged (the arrow should be pointing to the green portion of the gauge). Whenever you check the gauge, also be sure to remove the fire extinguisher from its bracket and turn it upside down. Periodically turning the fire extinguisher upside down helps shake up the dry chemicals inside and keeps them from becoming caked on the bottom of the extinguisher. If the chemicals become caked, the extinguisher may not discharge properly when it is needed.

Finally, many residential fire extinguishers have a limited shelf life and are not designed to be recharged. Once a residential fire extinguisher is 12 years old it should be discarded and replaced. To safely dispose of an old fire extinguisher, take it outside away from buildings and cars, pull the pin, and discharge it while holding it upside down. This will allow the propellant gases inside to escape, while keeping most of the dry chemicals inside the extinguisher.